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INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0513
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 7319
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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000112

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS, SCA/RA AND PM/PPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/19/2016
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: 1206 BOAT TRAINING TO SUPPORT
COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTERDICTION EFFORTS

REF: 06 STATE 3112

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROBERT O. BLAKE, JR. REASONS: 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (U) Post supports PACOM's approval of \$1.4 million to conduct boat training with the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) through 1206 FY07 funding. This initiative provides training and equipment necessary for the SLN to effectively conduct Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations off the coast of Sri Lanka. This proposal complements the 10 Zodiac Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIB) expected to be delivered in 2nd Quarter FY07 under the FY06 1206 program. Training may also include 6 "Boston Whaler" patrol boats the United States may provide to the SLN through 1206 2006 funding. (Note: Boston Whalers were purchased for Thailand under the FY06 1206 proposal and may go to Sri Lanka due to Thailand's current situation. Post and the GSL support the provision of the Boston Whalers to the SLN.)

¶2. (C) Navy interdiction training and equipment will prepare two 90-sailor platoons to carry out board and search procedures. This training provides defensive support for the SLN against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO). The primary focus of VBSS operations that this equipment and training will support is the elimination of illegal weapons and cargo destined for the LTTE from entering Sri Lanka. In addition, training will provide enhanced tactics and procedures needed by the SLN to provide protection against offensive operations launched by LTTE Sea Tigers. Post anticipates training to begin in early 2008. We anticipate that for force protection reasons, training will take place at an SLN base in the south, such as Galle or Tangalle. The boats will later be moved to the northeastern harbor of Trincomalee, where they will be deployed.

¶3. (U) This effectively complements the FY06 1206 effort, which is funding the installation of three 25nm X-band radars with 24/7 capability and is expected to be operational in July 2007. This significant maritime situational awareness will allow the SLN unimpaird 24-hour continuous monitoring over the LTTE's major shipping lanes. This new situational awareness requires the ability to intercept ships carrying LTTE cargo any time during the 24 hour period. Equipment required for effective operations include ballistic helmets, body armor-Level III protection and plates, generation 2 monocular Night Vision Goggles (NVG), and miscellaneous items. However, the new maritime situational awareness by

itself will not prevent illegal weapons and cargo from entering Sri Lanka. Therefore, training and equipping forces to interdict is imperative.

¶4. (C) Since the GSL may seek to cast the boat donation and training as evidence of the United States' support for the GSL's offensive military campaign in the east, we will request the training be conducted in a low key manner, away from the press and public. If the donation and training do become public, we will emphasize that their purpose is strictly defensive.

¶5. (U) Ambassador and DCM cleared this message.
BLAKE